

CULTURE



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GRINGE

**PERSONAL JOURNAL
ABOUT THE RED
ROSE COFFEE
HOUSE
& BISTRO**

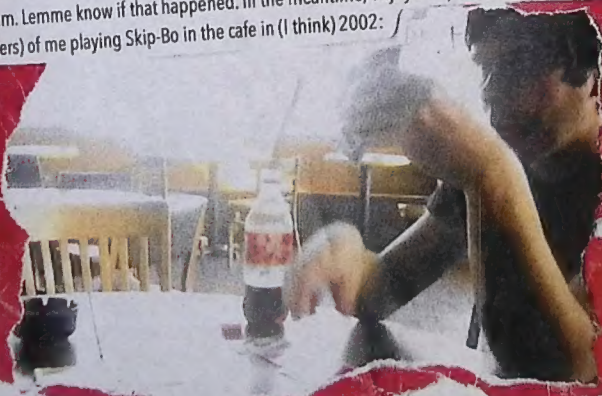


**AND SOME OF THE REALLY REALLY COOL
SHOWS THAT HAPPENED THERE**

THIS IS NOT ANY SORT OF HISTORY OR FACTUAL JOURNALISM ABOUT THE RED ROSE, THIS IS A PERSONAL NARRATIVE! So, there are no rules here, right? WRONG. I'll do my best to be accurate about any claims or about any timelines here. I guess I owe THAT much to ya.

The Red Rose Coffee House was a pretty popular place for the Murfreesboro / MTSU community for a loooooong time, but what this zine is gonna focus on is the era from around 2001 until 2004 or so - that is when I spent the most time there. During this time it became a pretty dang popular music venue thanks to the efforts of co-owner Bingham Barnes and his excellent booking abilities. He had booked some shows previously at venues all around town like 'The Boro and Sebastians - and had brought national bands to town like The Donnas, Cat Power, Superdrag, American Hi-Fi, Man or Astro-man, and Joan of Arc just to name a few. It also goes without saying that he also booked some amazing local shows featuring amazing Murfreesboro, Nashville, and other regional bands. SO, when he took over the reigns at The Red Rose we knew that it would become THE place in town to play. And it totally, totally did.

So first and foremost the Red Rose was a coffee shop / bistro that was honestly just a really cool place to hang. It wasn't uncommon for people to chill there all day sometimes and it usually had a built in crowd of some really interesting people. It also played some of the coolest music, mainly because the baristas got to play what they wanted. So yeah, you might hear an entire album of some midwestern screamo followed by electronic NYC indie dance stuff followed by some Americana during a typical afternoon. Now...once again, this is referring to the era from around 2001-2004 specifically. For some reason I remember them at one point trying to stay open 24 hours. I really don't think I'm making that up....but maybe I am? I have this weird vague memory of me and a friend rolling over there at like, 3 am to see how it was going. OR.....maybe that was a dream. Lemme know if that happened. In the meantime, enjoy this picture (taken by Rachel Rogers) of me playing Skip-Bo in the cafe in (I think) 2002: /



IT WAS DESTINED TO BECOME THE PLACE TO PLAY

Due to the super cool new owners who took over in 01 (Barnes and Micheal Mullins) as well as the super cool staff (which included Chuck Bruner, Andrew Seward - who would go on to play in Against Me, Sharon Van Etten, a cool guy named Kevin, and many more) this place was destined to become a killer venue. It was a very accommodating place for bands to play at...if I remember right, bands would get free meals, free drinks, and most if not all of the door money. I think at first they started booking only on Fridays and weekends,

and eventually would book bands on random weeknights if they were on tour or whatever. I THINK the first show I saw there was a band called Crooked Fingers, which was the new project of Archers of Loaf frontman Eric Bachmann. That had to be in early 2001. That show was pretty crazy to me because in high school I was a huge Archers of Loaf fan! NOW, one thing to keep in mind is that during this time, there weren't a lot of great places to play for indie touring bands in Nashville. You had The End, Exit In, Indienet, The Muse, Slow Bar, Blue Sky Court...maybe a couple more smaller places. But during this era a lot of indie bands found that playing Murfreesboro was more appealing than playing Nashville because of the vibrant music scene here. That fact combined with the Red Rose's welcoming atmosphere and built in crowd made it the place to be for certain indie bands. SO with all of that being said, here is a list of the shows I personally remember going to, cos why not?

The Rock-A-Teens, many many shows by The Features, Of Montreal, Calvin Johnson (founder of K Records and after a few songs he just opened the floor up the questions, where my friend J.D. yelled out "Can Courtney Love be stopped?!!"), I Am The World Trade Center (who obviously had to change their name in late '01), tons of great local shows from bands (like Glossary, Kill Devil Hills, Imaginary Baseball League, Feable Weiner, etc), Elf Power, Against Me, Mooney Suzuki, The Datsons, Mates of State, Dressy Bessy, Deathray Davies, The Faint (there was a great after show party after that one), Tara Jane O'Neil, Azure Ray, Lucero, Drive By Truckers (or maybe it was just Patterson Hood?),.....I'm missing a lot here. Other bands that I missed include Appleseed Cast (they played there multiple times), Cursive, Dearhoof, Les Savy Fav, Songs:Ohia, Richard Buckner, Motion City Soundtrack, Shipping News.....that's all I can really remember right now.

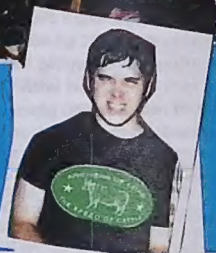


OF MONTREAL playin on the deck - photo by Chuck Bruner |



Pictured: Crooked Fingers at the Rose, once again taken by Chuck Bruner - Chuck I hope you don't mind me raiding your Flickr but damn dude it's like you were the only one taking pictures back then!

Inset: me wearing my Archers of Loaf shirt to the show like a mega nerd




MEMORIES MEMORIES MEMORIES MEMORIES

One of my fist BIG memories of the Rose is when my band played the wedding of my friends Joe and April. Pretty sure that was in the summer of 2001. They had the ceremony on the deck and the reception inside, where we played. I remember April walking down the aisle to "The Swag" by Link Wray. It was VERY John Waters-esque! We learned a bunch of covers for the occasion, including Earth Angel where we reenacted the dance scene from Back to the Future where Marty Mcfly started to fade away.....then was saved by the power of love. YOU KNOW what I'm talking about. Pretty sure we played "Power of Love" as well. Actually i KNOW we did. I remember April's kid brother Jeffrey standing up front and recording our set with a VHS video camera. He taped the whole thing. Jeffrey went on years later to form the amazing band Cheap Time. Anyways, Joe and April moved to NYC after that. When my band played NYC for the first time, we played at Arleans Grocery. Joe and April came and said that we could stay at their apartment in Brooklyn. Cool! So they hopped in the van with us after the show and told us which way to head.....only problem was, they had never driven in a car to their apartment....they had only used the subway. We got lost. BIG TIME lost. For like, two hours. Keep in mind this was before GPS in cars and smartphones and stuff. We eventually found it and went up to their loft and they showed us the movie The Ring which had just came out, then we went to the rooftop where there was a vending machine that only sold 50 cent PBR beers.

One time I was there on a random monday and saw Bingham with a group of dudes in the parking lot. They were standing around a Volkswagen bug that was parked in the accessible parking spot, and had been left from the weekend. He didn't want to tow it, cos he was that nice of a guy. SO, around 8 of us got around it and I swear to god we lifted that thing up and moved it. YEP. We moved the car around 10 feet to the next open spot. Is that a common thing? I don't know how heavy cars are but damn with all the other guys lifting, it didn't feel that heavy. Anyways. The purpose of this story is to show just how cool the place was, they wouldn't even tow a car.

There was a record store in the back room for a while. It wasn't very big, but had several racks of records along with CDs, books, zines, maybe a few collectibles and stuff. I can't remember the name of the guy who ran it, he was cool and for some reason I remember him being from Alabama. There was also a couple of computers in there connected to the SUPER FANCY internet - which a lot of us didn't have in our homes at the time. So yeah, you could get on there and do your Myspace stuff or look at band websites or even rotten dot com if you were feeling fancy. One time I checked my Myspace there and FORGOT TO LOG OFF. The next time I logged in, someone had changed my headline quote and bio. It was actually pretty funny, I remember all of it. My headline said "hey, I'm Ben Slack, look at me, aren't I cool?" and the bio said my hobbies included "having bad hair and looking mean." I loved it and I think I know who did it. OH, the days of shared public computers, what were we thinking. For a while, there was also this guy who would do body suspension in the back BACK room. He had this harness thing and would just go back there and do it. It wasn't a public thing, it was just a space that he used. I did get to go back there and see it once and was like, nahhh, not for me.

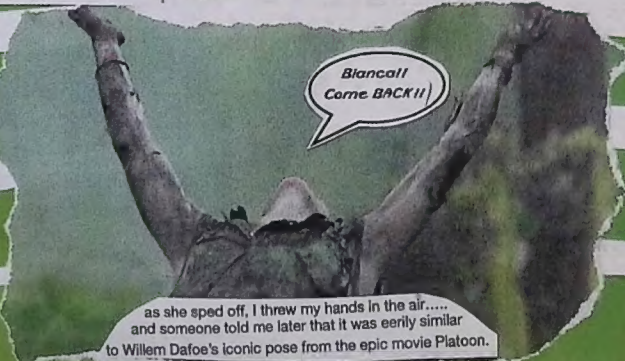


The record store in the back. Note the computers on the left. I'll let you guess who took this pic THAT'S RIGHT Chuck did!

MEMORIES MEMORIES MEMORIES MEMORIES

I remember going there early in the day once and there, sitting on the patio, was Ian Mackaye. Ya know, Minor Threat, Fugazi, Dischord Records?? It was crazy. There he was with his beanie on chatting it up with my friend Alicia. He was in town because he had spoken at MTSU the night before - THAT was really cool. It was awesome hearing someone speak at a recording industry school who was SO anti recording industry. It wasn't uncommon to see random cool people like that at the Red Rose. I heard that Henry Rollins went there after doing a thing at MTSU as well. One time some really famous skateboarder did a spoken word thing or something like that. I wish I remember who it was. Zach Galifianakis stopped by there along with Jim Gaffigan after their show at MTSU in 2003 (or maybe that was the Boro.....hmmm....not sure). Kings Of Leon hung out there a few times right before they really took off. I know cos they were friends with my band and came to some of our shows there, and I remember people openly making fun of their tight pants. One time Juliana Hatfield's brother had a band and they played there, and lo-and-behold she showed up with them. And randomly, the lead singer of the band Remy Zero moved to town and made it his favorite hang. He was a nice guy, I always thought it was crazy that he once married Alyssa Milano for like, a year. He would stand right up front and watch local bands and was super supportive of the scene.

The deck outside became a great spot for bands to play - they usually reserved that for some of the bigger local bands and occasionally some of the big touring bands. The Features played the deck a lot, and I remember it being SO crowded at those shows - inside and out. People were spilled out into the parking lot. Of Montreal played on the deck as well to a modest crowd. Fluid Ounces and The Katies played a show on it as well. There was one show in particular that produced quite the cinematic scene from me...to the large crowd in attendance. There was this girl I was dating who rode a motorcycle everywhere she went, which at the time was pretty wild. LONG STORY SHORT. She ended up getting into a pretty big argument with one of my friends, it escalated, and well, I guess I didn't do enough to intervene. In a fit of rage she grabbed her helmet, ran to her motorcycle, and started it up.....then revved the HELL outta the engine. This attracted the attention of everyone on the deck, including the band playing.. I ran up to her and was like, hey....come back, it's all good....that's when she did a burnout in the road and peeled off with me left there yelling her name. I looked back, and everyone was like.....Oh, shit! Here's the best part. I NEVER SAW HER AGAIN. No joke, she was a drifter and after that she just moved away. Wouldn't return calls. Nothing. It was like something out of a damn movie. Haha anyways.



Blanc!!
Come BACK!!

as she sped off, I threw my hands in the air....
and someone told me later that it was eerily similar
to Willem Dafoe's iconic pose from the epic movie Platoon.

One time we played a Halloween show there and decided it would be a GREAT idea to wear all white and cover ourselves in fake blood. So during set change we got our stuff set up, then went to the van and just covered ourselves. We made our big entrance, kicked in to the first song, and suddenly realize we couldn't hold our guitar picks or drum sticks. Yeah, that stuff is slippery. We made it through one song and had to make the walk of shame to the bathroom to wash it off. I guess it made for good comedy.

So yeah, not only did Sharon Van Etten work there, she had her first show there. Which is pretty cool considering how amazingly successful she's become. It was in May of 2002 and it sorta has history to it, as in it wasn't advertised or had a flyer or anything like that. I won't go in to the details here as to why she had to be secretive about it because it's not my place - but she has openly talked about the situation in interviews. Let me just say that the show was on a certain day that a certain controlling person in her life was out of town. So word spread that Sharon was gonna be playing that night and we all showed up to support her of course! Her early stuff was a lot more emo than what her later released music sounded like, but it was good....and very emotional. She looked nervous as hell, not because of the crowd. I remember it pretty well. She moved away shortly thereafter and I thought well, I'll never see Sharon again. Boy was I wrong! I'm constantly amazed at how much an incredible songwriter she has become. I don't blame her for not wanting to talk about Murfreesboro a whole lot (she did mention it on her Marc Maron interview a while back). I know it brings back a lot of not so good personal memories for her. But hey if you haven't checked out her latest album, DO IT! Check them all out actually.



sharon tending bar at the rose. I won't tell you who took this pic but his initials are C.B.



Feable Weiner were so much fun



amazing local band KILL DEVIL HILLS were always awesome to see there

In August of 2003 Bingham and co exited as owners of the Red Rose, and even though the new owner tried to keep things the same, it just wasn't **QUITE** the same. They did still book pretty good shows there for sure, but it sorta seemed like a bit of a shell of it's former self. It lasted until December of 2004 under the new ownership, then just suddenly it closed. I know the date of the last show - Dec 4 2004 - because I was **SUPPOSED** to be there because my band played. I had broken both of my feet a couple months before so I was back living with my parents. The other two guys played acoustic sorta, but called me on the phone a couple times and had me say a few things over the PA. The opening band that night was Be Your Own Pet - we had played a lot of shows with them and they were always awesome. In a way I think it was kinda cool that BYOP played the last show there, because at the time they were pretty young. I am not even sure if all of them were even 18 yet??? That's one thing I forgot to mention earlier: The Red Rose was all ages. It was the only all ages venue in Murfreesboro and since it was technically a restaurant, it could sell beer to the 21 up crowd. But yeah, it was cool to have a place that everyone could go. It was sad when it closed, but since I wasn't in Murfreesboro at the time I didn't really get the full brunt of it. I just heard what my friends told me on the phone. The building, a really cool example of 1930s architecture, hung around until 2011 when it was finally torn down. A lot of people had big emotions over that, and rightfully so. But I guess it would've taken **WAY** too much money to bring it back to code and safe to open. I actually know some people who took that as the last straw and moved to Nashville in protest. It would be awfully cool if it was still there and I know that with time someone would have fixed it up, but in 2011 Murfreesboro reality, it just wasn't gonna happen.

don't know who took this pic, but hopefully it's ok that i used it - thanks

